

Can you just stop saying stupid things and free me from this lovely, cute, fragrant cheese

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

Mulling over the legacy of LucasArts and the mostly failed attempts of their hopeful contenders to replicate it in the point and click adventure genre I couldn't help humming along to the Carly Simon classic, 'Nobody Does It Better'. It quickly became lodged in my brain on a constant loop like a dog with a musical toy bone.

*"And nobody does it better, Though sometimes I wish
someone could, Nobody does it quite the way you do,
Why'd you have to be so good?"*

Unless you happened to be Adventure Soft or Revolution Software, it was hardly worth setting yourself up for a fall in

the shadow of George's baby (*Lucas, come on, keep up*). A defeatist attitude isn't necessarily a bad thing if it saves you from wasting your time, effort and finances on an embarrassing flop that ends up hogging finite space in a landfill site. Look at Homer Simpson, it works for him. He never published a bad computer game. See, case proven.

Publishers, Epic Marketing, clearly didn't share his "if you don't try, you can't fail" approach to life or games development, hence in 1998 the intriguing paranormal adventure game, Sixth Sense Investigations, emerged from the naively optimistic minds of one-game wonders, CineTECH (you have to shout the last bit). Through the mystical voodoo of web time-warping you can check out the profiles of the developers involved on their own long-dead Skynet web site.



Sadly, SSI is a game from Epic, not so much an epic game. I'll let the back of the box explain...

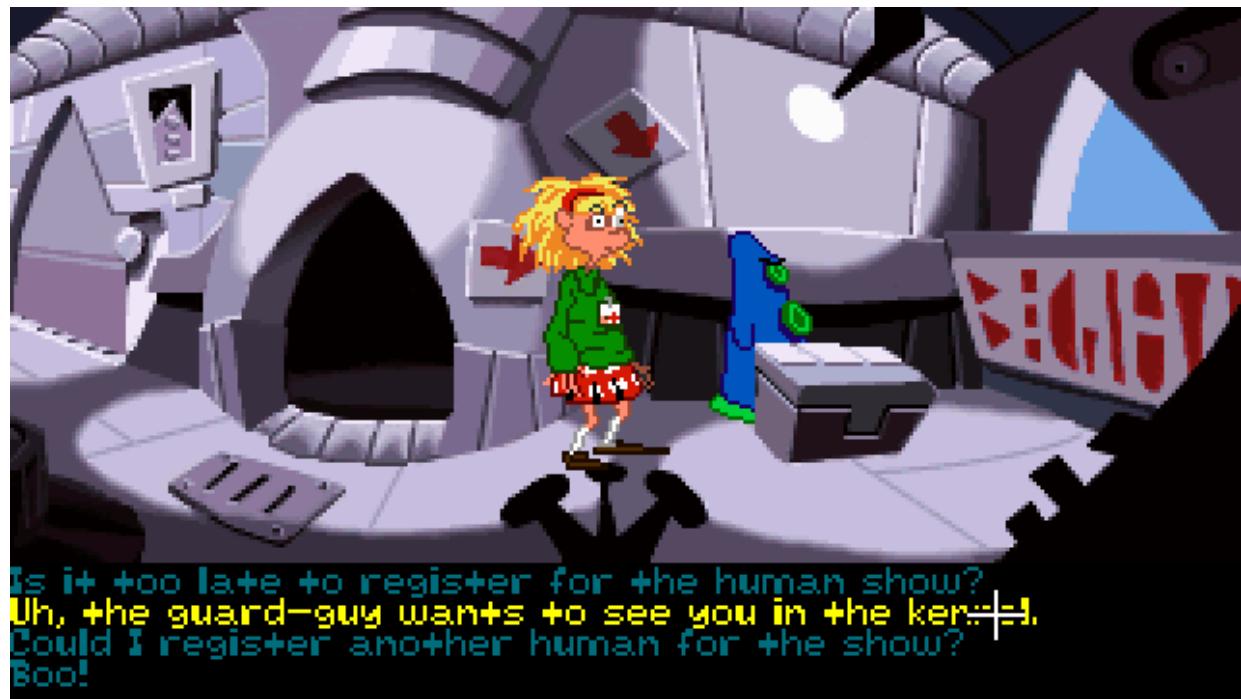
"Sixth Sense Investigations is a new graphics adventure suitable for use on any AGA Amiga, based on the classic LucasArts style games. The base storyboard tells of a crazy young guy who has the ability to communicate with the spirit of a sarcastic man. A friend, who thinks of himself as a detective, profits from the psychic abilities of his friend (the crazy psychic guy), by using his skills to solve the most bizarre problems of the rich."

Pidgin English from the outset, it only descends further into the mire of Google Translate quality dialogue, and prolonged mundanity. Also, for the record, it won't boot on a stock CD32 in spite of any claims made in the PR blurb.

In case you're confused, and why wouldn't you be? Ben is the pyjama-garbed crazy psychic in question, and the 'spirit' he communicates with is an actual ghost named Arthur. The preface doesn't refer to Ben's general demeanour; *neither* character is especially sarcastic, that's a bit of a misnomer. Part of the discrepancy appears to derive from Arthur's inability to remember who he's the ghost of. His corporeal counterpart may well have been the King of Sarcasmpolis for all we know. Not the first or last thing to have been lost in translation!



I'd hazard a guess that CineTECH were cognisant of the tendency for jaded, sarcastic protagonists to be correlated with some of the most popular entries in the adventure genre, and that gamers find it easy to identify with them. Heroes (or *anti*-heroes rather) had to have an edge to appeal to precocious teenagers. It was tantamount to a sure-fire recipe for success, clearly. You're practically halfway to a gold star if you inject a bit of snarkiness. Unless of course you tip the balance too far and cross the line into spitefulness, as in Simon the Sorcerer II. Not that there was any chance of reprising that particular faux pas with Sixth Sense; the writers forgot to imbue Arthur with this personality trait, so drawing attention to it in the manual and on the back of the box seems palpably misplaced. My German isn't proficient enough to establish if any of this makes sense in its native tongue.



One thing CineTECH *did* get right is the enticing 256 colour art style; it's appropriately cartoony and evocative of Day of the Tentacle, LucasArts' 1993 classic released only for the PC and Mac originally. Its influence over the direction and feel of

Sixth Sense is never hidden. Rather it's celebrated, worn like a badge of honour on its sleeve, and even acknowledged in the manual, and why not? It's the pinnacle of point and click adventuring, an ingenious bar-setter that no-one managed to transcend at the time, or since. If you can arouse fond memories of such a paragon of excellence, no matter how remote, you're on the right track.

You *could* say the two games even share a psychic link to rival that of Ben's to Arthur. Coder, Vittorio Ferrari, reveals in an interview with the German web site Amiga Gadget (jump halfway down the page for the original English text) that initially he intended to port Day of the Tentacle to the Amiga, and even produced a demo to explore the possibilities, though was forced to abandon the idea when LucasArts turned down his proposal. Sixth Sense Investigations was his backup plan, the next best thing.



"I am the artist for the game Sixth Sense Investigations. Our team was made of 8 people scattered all over the globe and that made developing sometimes harder. Nevertheless, I think the programmer and developer made a good effort in creating a classic and entertaining

game. Looking at it now I would do it differently, but at the time I was more a newbie then I am today. :) So if I would create the game now, I surely would make a better game. :)

But thanks for all the nice comments though. It still surprises me that people liked the game so much, since we never earned a lot of money with it.

I do have another design for a adventure game, more serious in style, so maybe someday I will make it for the PC if there enough people to buy it. :)"

**Dutch graphician, Raymond Zachariasse
(comment left on goodolddays.net game profile page)**

If any of the artwork presented here reminds you of the Rachel Raccoon series that will be because one of CineTECH's other artists, Canadian Leslie Dietz, was responsible for both.

In Sixth Sense Investigations you play as two polar opposite characters - monster-conked PI Frank (I wonder if he's related to Big Nose the Caveman), and bohemian psychic, Ben - alternating between them as the three parallel universe scenarios demand. Day of the Tentacle's dimension-hopping sci-fi plot is also conspicuous in Sixth Sense courtesy of a one-way inter-dimensional doorway, along with its mad professor character who closely mirrors Dr Fred. In each case they misjudge their attempts at teleportation with repercussions that hinder the core goal, introducing a series of puzzles designed to rectify the situation.



"Frank: Here we are, let's see what happens. Hey, what happens. Wow! Wow! I can't believe it, it worked. I suppose I just have to go through this door. Really very easy. No problem. Erm, will I survive? OK, Ben, I'll rescue you (walks through portal). Ahhhh."

It's hard to tell if the last word is a cry of terror, or a gravy-appreciating 'ahhhh, that's a nice aroma' Bisto moment considering there's no emotion whatsoever in the voice.

Arthur, the outfit-switching ghost, instead appears to be a parody of the genie from Simon the Sorcerer II rather than something borrowed from Day of the Tentacle.



CineTECH also appear to have been significantly inspired by Star Wars. Walt - the robot doctor - suffers from a bad back and arthritis. Despite hating to complain or fish for sympathy, he's extremely adept at it, much like C-3PO. "I've got a bad feeling about this", comments the Emperor of Robopoly, mimicking Hans Solo, obviously. Then there's the scrolling text from the introduction of each movie in the franchise, emulated to form the 'Empire Bank of Commerce' LED billboard.

Programmed utilising a combination of Blitz Basic II and CineTECH's in-house graphic adventure creation tool, VEGA, designed to facilitate ports from the PC, Sixth Sense was only ever available for the Amiga.

"Sixth Sense is a graphics adventure for the Amiga. If you should not have an Amiga but a PC or Mac that doesn't mean you can not buy the game. Actually we would be very happy if you buy it. Unfortunately you will not be able to play it without an Amiga."

Judging by the baffling dialogue throughout the game it's hard to tell if this is deliberately absurd in the vein of Joseph Heller's Catch-22, or simply incompetently translated. If it's the former, that's my kind of nonsense. Unfortunately, the

comedy doesn't filter through to the game itself, which is as bland and devoid of personality as a Chinese meal composed merely of boiled white rice with a side serving of more boiled white rice. Drenched in sugar-free rice milk.



Sixth Sense comes in two flavours, a floppy disk version that features text-only dialogue, and a full talkie CD edition requiring 1mb of fast RAM, consuming a data storage capacity of 227mb. It's not possible to enable simultaneous voices and text should you be struggling to decipher the sometimes muffled audio, or intend to sing along.

Frank - who underwent quite a dramatic makeover between the release of the demo and the final retail edition - speaks with a bit of a melancholy drawl so it's a tad strange that we have the option to slow him down further. On the contrary, you're more likely to want to switch to text mode to speed up the action.

Native British voice-over - I hesitate to call them - 'artists' took charge of the vocal recordings for the English localisation. While they're absolutely dire in terms of credibility and immersion, incomprehensibly they're the *only* reason you'd want to put yourself through the torture of

playing this. They're so bad you can't help slowing down your Miggy Wagon and rubber-necking at the catastrophe, seduced by the spectacle, bewildered by the evidence that the game passed the most fundamental quality control checks.

Glancing at the foreign European names in the list of credits, it's clear that the developers aren't the owners of the Leicester accents (or token American one belonging to Charles' mummy) we hear in-game. They could easily be the packing guys and gals from the UK distribution team given their underwhelming knack for bringing the cast to life. Strangely their names are nowhere to be seen amongst the long list of acknowledgements at the back of the impressively comprehensive manual. Well, perhaps it's not so strange if they were of the 'that'll have to do' mindset having listened to the result. You know how it goes; tight budgets, tighter still time frames.

It sounds as though the dialogue is being read from a script by actors occupying separate studios - or more likely - *broom cupboards*, and pieced together later in post-production. It's all so monotone and devoid of any sense of context or emphasis that it's impossible to suspend your disbelief for more than a few seconds. If Epic had instead fed the script through a text to voice synthesis device the result would be indistinguishable.

"The speech is a bit of a mixed blessing. Although most is well-acted (?!?!?), I find the speech of the main character a little monotonous and depressing."

Amiga Format review, the bracketed astonishment is mine



That said it's not as if any of this is detrimental to the virtue of the writing; that's equally amateur dramatics, junior school play material that only a parent could tolerate assuming their own child is involved.

Ben: Now I've got this map.

Barnie (the robo-cabbie): Well with that I know where to go, but that doesn't change the fact that I don't have the permission to go to the suburbs.

Ben: But that's very important to me.

Barnie: My driving license is important to me too. I can't risk losing my job otherwise I'll never be able to buy a present.

Ben: What present?

Barnie: Well, the father of the girl I love refuses to give me permission for marriage unless I can buy something really luxurious for her.

Ben: Oh, that's really bad. Now I understand why you can't risk losing your job. (Ben gives watch to taxi driver)

Ben: Would you take me there?

Barnie: Hey, that's a Swatch. Of course I'll take you there. That will certainly persuade my girlfriend's father that I can take care of his daughter.

Ben: Wonderful.

Star Wars fan Heiner de Wendt (it was his favourite movie at the time), and Claudio Preiano devised the dialogue and story, and it was transposed into English by the Amiga Translation Organisation. It's hard to say if the writing was Pulitzer Prize-winning material in its native tongue and ATO butchered it, or it was weak to begin with and they did a sterling job. German adventurers, feel free to comment below. Either way, it was commendable that ATO volunteered to make the game accessible beyond the borders of its conception without expecting any financial recompense. That showed true dedication to the spirit of the Amiga community at a time when it needed it the most.

"I'm the storyboard developer and co-project leader of Sixth Sense. My experience was similar to Raymond's - it was my first game project, and today I'd do a lot of things different. But it still was a fantastic experience, and despite the fact we haven't earned much with the game, I loved working with our great team, and I'm still amazed how many people still love the game even today.

I'm currently not in the Games biz anymore, but hey, you never know what the future holds for you..."

German story writer, Heiner de Wendt (comment left on goodolddays.net game profile page)

What's odd is that the manual states the game was partially translated to German by Thomas Steidling. I thought it was

initially written in German and minced into Engrish *afterwards*, and that's why it sounds unnatural and stilted like the work of ESL people whose hearts are in the right place but have bitten off more than they can chew. Whatever its linguistic roots, the game was also adapted for the Italian and French market.

"A new Amiga Translation Organisation (ATO) has been set up, comprising of fifteen Amiga users from around the world. Their plan is to translate the documentation for any shareware and commercial software for only the cost of a copy of the software for each of the team members. This should ensure that documentation is available for new software products in Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, French, Polish, Italian, German and Danish. ATO are still looking for translators and proofreaders and they can be reached via the Internet on the web via http://www2.dk-online.dk/users/ole_Friis/TRANS/ or via E-mail to olef@dk-online.dk"

(nothing has been saved at archive.org unfortunately, I checked)

CU Amiga issue 77 (July 1996)

If you thought things couldn't get any wackier, hold onto your deerstalkers wannabe gum-shoes, we're just getting started.



Most of the inhabitants are incapable of speaking without manically gesticulating with their hands (even the silhouettes of background people are at it!). It's like they're perpetually signing for the deaf, only every utterance is translated to hand movements in exactly the same way, so for all we know they could be saying, "I'm Frank and I'm a mighty PI-rate" over and over again. It wouldn't matter in the least that they'd all be speaking from Frank's perspective as I explain below. Actually, signing in-jokes would have been a neat touch if the cast insisted on impersonating flappy-armed Stan S. Stanman, used x salesman from Monkey Island.

"I'd stand on my head to make you a deal."



CineTECH, clearly no strangers to the eccentric, Tri-Island Area, pre-loved goods peddler created their own interpretation of the homage variety manifested in Sixth Sense's second-hand car salesman, Reginald. It's pretty clear this is what animator, Trevor Hall, was aiming for since Reginald is the most erratic and excitable of all, being the granddaddy of dystonia.





Casting our nets wider for LucasArts tropes, in Sixth Sense it's not possible to kill off any of the characters, which might have caused the game to come to an abrupt halt as in Sierra's early adventure games. Keep plugging away (saving often to workaround the terminal crashes) and you'll eventually get through it, falling back on super-sleuthing techniques acquired playing as police freelancers, Sam and Max. Anvil moment. Ouch.



In interviews the developers suggested this may take 8-10 hours on a first run-through, while YouTube longplays exist demonstrating it can be done in 2 once you know what you're doing. You'll find a three-part walkthrough in Amiga Format issues 126 - 128 where the entire game is whittled down to the obscure puzzles to be solved, without explaining much of the premise or pondering the irrelevance of the red herrings. You'd have established that from their extremely generous earlier 82% review in any case.

Breaking the fourth wall is often funny in self-contained realms that are supposedly unaware of your existence as a player if it happens with no prior warning, so there's an element of that here too. Frank occasionally turns to the camera to ask, "Why don't you stop doing these useless things?" if we've made a string of unsuccessful attempts at puzzle-solving.



• I'm lost in the Dinky Island jungle in Monkey II.
• When is SWOTL going to ship?
• Who thought up that dumb stump joke?
• Thank you, you've been very helpful. Good-bye.

To that effect, you may too have noticed the silhouettes framing the screen that we must look beyond to witness the story as it unfolds, much like in Day of the Tentacle. It's as though we're watching a play over the heads of an audience at times, or through a window or TV with random junk littering the periphery of the tableau to create a 'portal to another world'. Alternatively, perhaps I've tripped and fallen head first down the rabbit hole, and it's simply extra scenery to make the settings feel more busy and lived in, or the talented artists having fun, giving pretentious reviewers like moi something to ponder 20 years down the line. Who knows?



Wrapping up the genre staples, a 'point at verb, then at object' SCUMM style GUI is our method of control. More refined than Monkey Island it incorporates the later Sam and Max inspired addition of AI that tries to guess the most likely action you'd want to take as you hover your cursor over items in the scenery, or your inventory.



Swede and former demo-scene musician, Ken Mikael Berglund, lent his auditory expertise to the project. The result is subtly plinky-plonky-bouncy in a similar vein to Day of the Tentacle, setting the tone perfectly. It's pleasant enough, while not being especially memorable, as though composed to deliberately take a back seat to the more imposing voices. Congruously, it fades into the background - or cuts out altogether - as the characters converse (assuming I'm not mistaking this 'feature' for a glitch). There's also not a whole lot of it, so it's probably for the best that it's unobtrusive and soothing rather than attention-grabbing.

Bug testing doesn't appear to have been a top priority because Sixth Sense is riddled with them, and even fatal crashes aren't uncommon, so make sure you save regularly.

Certain characters lose half their face if another member of the cast is standing in close proximity and suddenly turns towards them. It reappears when they turn back the opposite way as though they're living inside a massive invisible hitbox that obliterates whatever is in the vicinity when occupying the same plane.

"There's a file missing in the english disk release
download it here."

A quote taken from the news section of CineTECH's web site. Shocking! Luckily game-patching is a thing of the past, and they now work out of the box. ;)

If the Vega engine is struggling to playback audio due to low memory or other technical hiccups it falls back on text dialogue so you don't miss anything. This occurs fairly frequently. Clever workaround though it has to be noted.

Music can potentially be silenced for owners of 040 processors due to a conflict with CPU caches, while a souped-up 060 processor may cause Frank to hurtle about the screen like a Madchester raver high on methamphetamine.



Typically when you pick up an object in any game you expect it to leave its original location as it's moved to the new one e.g. your bottomless pockets. Not so much in Sixth Sense; don't be surprised if you're able to scoop up an item and place it in your inventory only for an imprint to linger where you found it.

On a number of occasions, characters actually switch voices, seemingly parodying The Body Snatcher. Accordingly, you'll hear Frank speaking with Charles' voice and vice versa. At least I suppose it's germain to the parallel universe element of the plot. In Toon City Frank's doppelganger is known as 'Frick the fox'. He's a fox... called Frick. Who plays trilliards, rather than billiards.

I can only imagine that a mere handful of people were responsible for voicing multiple characters, and because they were recorded back to back with no context for guidance they sometimes got muddled. Assigning specific audio files to trigger points in code, the programmer may not even have heard aloud the voices at the time. Stitching together this audio-visual patchwork can't have been an easy process for founder of CineTECH and sole programmer, Vittorio Ferrari,

who had to simultaneously juggle coding with managing the project.

Animation is minimal. Characters sort of moonwalk across the landscape in a gliding motion while walking, and we often pick up objects lying on the ground by bending our knees slightly without actually touching them.

Characters and incidents we haven't yet encountered are alluded to, which can be a bit disorienting. On several occasions you move onto another location and things tend to click into place and make sense following further questioning. Perhaps that's deliberate. There's nothing wrong with the odd 'aha!' moment in storytelling, and there's no reason our understanding of a situation *must* occur in chronological order.

Sorry, there's more. Entering Mrs Goldenhauer's house as Frank we stand in the hallway engaging her in a long drawn out conversation regarding a suitable peace offering for Candy. When she's satisfied that we've earned the right to be let in (opting for a tracking device over the "dirty rodent"), she welcomes us inside, and we enter a house we're already standing in!



I'm terribly sorry about that.
I've brought something for Candy ...
I wanted to apologize honestly.
I just wanted to leave again.

Ultimately it's a fruitless exercise because our efforts to rescue Ralph's beloved games console are thwarted by Mrs G's wily offspring.

Charles: You again? Get out of my room. Frank: I'm here in the name of the law. Charles: I don't care. Get lost or I'll call the police. Frank: Alright, I'm going.

As for the plot, I'll try to summarise the key points...

Mrs Goldenhauer visits the Sixth Sense detective agency to request their help in finding her missing cat. Following a wacky perpetrator-divining exercise in which Ben serves as a levitating, oscillating human pointer, it's established that her bratty son, Charles, is the catnapper.



Frank: My colleague Benjamin will now call an old wise ghost who will lead us to the cat's kidnapper.

Mrs Goldenhauer: A ghost? Something like a ghost?

Charles: I don't believe in such fairy tales.

Frank: You'll be convinced in just a moment.

Ben: Can I start now?

Frank: Yes please.

Ben: I call you oh great ghost, please appear now.

Mrs G: Oh, it's that simple?

Frank: Er, well, it looks quite simple, but actually it's quite hard.

Ben climbs upstairs to his room to rescue Candy the cat only to inadvertently send it hurtling from the ceiling fan to which it was strapped for reasons of a torturous nature (he was searching for the light switch and flicked on the wrong one you see). Cat mummy from that moment on holds the agency

responsible for the trauma endured by Candy and will need to be treated with kid gloves to melt her enmity.



Ben goes to visit Sixth Sense's homage to Q from James Bond to test out his latest inventions while Frank investigates an incident at the local cheesemonger shop. After rescuing Mr O'Cheeser from a cheese worse than fate, much to his chagrin because we have to sacrifice his work of art in the process, we transition back to Frank's psychic sidekick.



Mooching around 'Toys n U' "trying out the latest toys" - one of thirty-two different locations - Ben is rudely interrupted by a borg of combat robots who ransack the shop and shanghai the torpid psychic, hauling him off to their home planet to await trial. He didn't predict that one, did he?





We next join him in a secure cell where he has been incarcerated on an alien android-planet. Guarding him is a depressed robot prison warden called Ralph who has fallen head over heels in love with Charles' games console. Telepathically linked to the device despite existing in another dimension he's utterly forlorn for he believes it's being abused by the spoilt rich kid who works it to death around the clock. Playing *games* on it of all possibilities!

In return for freeing him, Ralph asks Ben to steal the console so robot and PlayStation (it's bound to be, this is 1998) can be joined together in a cybernetic matrimony, of sorts. To accomplish this we'll need Frank's assistance, thereby invoking the games' character switching/object retrieval and swapping mechanic a la Day of the Tentacle.

At several junctures, the leading duo voice their concerns over breaking the law, yet do it anyway 'for the greater good'. Then at the other end of the politically correct spectrum we have Arthur recommending suicide as a means of inter-dimensional travel, leaving us wondering what exactly this game's target market was intended to be.



Ben: Do you have any idea how I can get away from here again?

Arthur: Sure, it's quite simple. Commit suicide and become a ghost.

Ben: Actually I'd hoped I could get out of here alive.

...

Ben: What can I do?

Arthur: I've already told you, commit suicide. It's not as bad as it seems. I've got to know quite a few people who have committed suicide.

Ben: Arthur, please.

Arthur: OK, I'm leaving.

Ben: (sigh) Sometimes he's really bad.

And just when you think you know mild-mannered, morbidly depressed dapper gentleman, Frank, speaking of Reginald,

he springs this gem on us: "God, I hope I never see that #%^\$& again!"

It's amazing he can say anything comprehensible at all chewing on that Sherlock pipe 24 hours a day, let alone spit obscenities at (admittedly) duplicitous salesmen who deserve all they get.



Meanwhile, on the robot planet Ben is brought before Emperor Paltrytine to be interrogated (definitely *not* Palpatine, this isn't Star Wars after all). Sixth Sense's totally original old crone overlord is concerned that Ben has overheard the finer details of his nefarious scheme and wants to establish exactly what he knows before deciding whether or not to execute him.



In typical James Bond villain fashion this gives him and his henchman the opportunity to explain his devious, dastardly machinations to someone with the power to apply the kibosh, oh and also the audience. That's us. In the process, he reveals that with the help of the 'chosen ones' who have an incarnation in every dimension - Charles being his stooge on earth - his ultimate goal is the conquest of the universe. Of course it is. Isn't it always?

Having escaped from our Robopoly prison, ironically with turncoat guard Ralph's assistance, we switch our focus back to Frank who has landed in Toon World thanks to the bumbling incompetence of the mad professor.



Here we hold numerous never-ending conversations with regards to protesting a national holiday declared by the mayor. This is the one and only day of the year where the populace are granted the unique opportunity to work all day long.

Curt (the customs barrier invigilator): "Well, the guys of 'Unemployed in Protest' protest against the National Working Holiday. They refuse to work because they don't want to take the vacancies away from the unemployed."

That's the gist anyway. I lost the will to live after the 20th exchange on the same topic. Even Monty Python would have reached the punchline in the same century in which they began.

All this culminates in breaking a Bob Dylan impersonating criminal called Brad out of prison, 'for the right reasons' of course. And somehow this leads onto getting the games console to Ralph and him helping us to take control of the emperor's super-computer, enabling us to save the world from certain doom. Again, refer to my earlier point re: losing the will.



Anyway, skipping ahead for sanity-salvaging reasons, we get back to earth leaving Ralph to take care of our nemesis and it transpires that giant rats from outer space have invaded the cheesemonger's store. Or something. The end.

If this entails exterminating the entire cast of Sixth Sense so there can never be a *Seventh* Sense Investigations, bring it on chivalrous rodent saviours! You'll never know how close I came to taking Arthur up on his kind offer before the sweetly abrupt release of that final curtain came calling.

You see what you've reduced me to CineTECH? I've become the Whiny Irritable Video Game Nerd. In my defence, this was a supposedly professional, more than full price £29.99 product, not a PD offering made out of passion and pixie dust. It was even demo-ed at World Of Amiga '98 and several other trade shows. The truth must out! Don't waste your precious pennies!

Quite possibly the reason the experience was so cringeworthy is that it's reminiscent of the awful short play I wrote for an obligatory drama class I took when I was eleven years old. What made it infinitely worse is that I had to act it out along with several friends in front of the class. It was a

humiliating train wreck - the script was met with baffled, blank stares and sideways glances, not least because my aptitude for thesbianism was on par with the have-a-go backroom staff playing the various parts in Sixth Sense.

I found that script in the loft years later when I was in my late twenties. Reading the first few lines again so long after burying that monstrosity deep in the abyss of my subconscious stung my eyes like a nettle; on autopilot I hurriedly doused the exercise book in petrol, lit a match and turned to walk away in slow motion as the inferno erupted into a hail of raging embers behind me. Or did I just chuck it in the bin? It was so long ago I forget.



Seductively hypnotic as the blend of wooden acting, jarring animation and cockamamie dialogue is, Sixth Sense isn't a game I'll be returning to any time soon. Which is why some of the positive reviews it received at the time of release are so

difficult to swallow. Amiga Format, for instance, highlighted many of the same flaws I have, yet still awarded Sixth Sense a healthy 82% in November 1998.

"Although not quite as good as Monkey Island, it's certainly getting there. Only the minor flaws with the game engine detract from what is otherwise a very enjoyable game."

A month earlier CU Amiga pre-emptively upped the ante by 1% without being blind to its numerous flies in the ointment, so to speak.

"The flaws in Sixth Sense are there, but they don't stop it from being a pleasant, even rewarding game once you get into a rhythm. The CD version represents superior value if for no other reason than convenience - my guess is that you won't want to leave the speech on full-time.

Uneven at times but still a worthy submission to the world of adventure gaming."

To mention Monkey Island and Sixth Sense in the same breath as though almost on an even footing is beyond absurd. Come on, let's keep it real. Comparing Noddy and Shakespeare I could let slide.

All I can imagine is that this late into the Amiga's convalescence the critics were grateful for whatever scraps they could lay their jittery, game-deprived mitts on and went overboard to show their appreciation. A similar bunker mentality camaraderie infuses many Amiga game reviews from that era.

Well, in *some* camps anyway. Can you imagine Amiga Power mollycoddling CineTECH in the same way solely for the benefit of boosting the community's moral had they still

been around? More to the point, by the stage they'd likely have been too preoccupied analysing Michael Caine movies and preparing for the dawning apocalypse to even notice.

